

## THE "HUMAN SIDE" OF SCRIPTURE

In a previous lecture we had called attention to the demand that nowhere the divine and human aspects of Scripture dare be separated or pitted against each other. The Holy Scripture is the Word of God in all its parts and in every aspect. To speak of the human side or aspect of Holy Scripture is not incorrect as long as thereby the gift of God to man is respected as wholly divine. The human aspect of Scripture no more diminishes the divinity and inerrancy of Scripture than the human nature of Christ detracts from Him who sits at the right hand of God, very God of very God.

Instead of spending time in discussing some of the difficulties men meet in the use of Scripture because of the human aspects we should like to propose some basic theses that are the presuppositions of any Biblical approach to Scripture.

I. It is Biblical and therefore Lutheran doctrine that the original text of the canonical books was written by holy men of God through the Holy Spirit who condescended to give man the revelation of truth in human language.

The main foundation of the Reformation are the two doctrines that lost and condemned man is saved by grace for Christ's sake through faith and that this can and must be taught according to Scripture alone. The material and formal principle stand or fall together.

Where the formal principle is sacrificed to the reason or self-determination of man neither the Law nor the Gospel can be preached according to the sola scriptura principle.

Where man may decide what of Scripture is to be accounted the Word of God or where man may draw his conclusions from extra-Biblical sources there the power of the Kerygma is diminished because the Law is weakened and the full grace of God in Christ cannot be preached. Both Law and Gospel are fully valid where Scripture is the Word of God. But the sola scriptura is confessed not that thereby souls be saved but because the Scripture must be the only source of the preaching that leads man to repentance and the knowledge of salvation. Such repentance and faith will also lead to the acceptance of the full authority of Scripture. RPL

There can be no faith in an immediate Christ aside of, before, or outside of Holy Scripture. Faith in Christ is Faith in the Word. Luther says: "Outside of His Word and without His Word we know of no Christ, much less do we know Christ's opinion." (WA 30 II 564)

The doctrine of Scripture as divinely inspired is Scripture's own doctrine. This is the Holy Spirit's statement on Scripture, not a theory. It may become theory if we attempt to understand the "HOW" of inspiration.

The Holy Spirit's statements on Scripture are found throughout Scripture.

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II Tim. 3: 14-17. The theopneustos here has passive sense. Cf. Bauer and Kittel. This statement reminds us not only of the act of inspiration but also speaks of the effect on man. Kai oophelimos.

We must remember too that there is no mention of the writers here but of pasa graphes; all Scripture, every Scripture.. This is a total statement which was accepted without debate by any Jew.

Another passage is Hebrews 1,1.2. "God who etc. " We find the dia with the gentive here and in other passages dealing with inspiration. e.g. Acts 1,16: dia, "by the mouth of David"; etc. How this Deus locutus est per is to be taken is seen by the statements: "by his prophets" and "by His Son".

Also the instrumental en with the dativ in many passages shows how Christ speaks of Holy Scripture, as in Matthew 22, 43: "How then does David in spirit call him Lord?" (En pneumati kalei)

Others can easily be adduced. Always the human writer takes a secondary place and is seldom emphasized. The Holy Scriptures are independent of human cooperation as divine word, yet the Human agents and the human language by God's choice speak the inerrant truth of God.

II. This speaking of the Holy Ghost in Holy Scriptures is not limited or hampered by the humanum by the human language or the human author.

There is much talk of the servant character of Scripture, Knechtsgestalt. The Bible truly is God's servant or a servant of God, but this must not be understood in the sense that God's Word or Truth is in servitude under the form or appearance of the Bible. The Revelation of God is not hiding or veiling but rather a revealing. The Creator has condescended to speak to the creature in the creatures language. This katabasis is a proof of the Creators immeasurable grace and love. In this connection Luther can hardly say enough in praising God's "Leutseligkeit und Freundlichkeit". Luther is always astonished at the fact that the Holy Ghost has come so near to man. This is true of the Deus incarnatus and the Holy Scriptures. God speaks to man in a way that is tolerable to man. God has revealed himself to man to the extent that man could bear. Man will never, not till he sees Him face to face, fully appreciate, taste or comprehend the majesty and glory of God's revelation in Scripture. For this reason) one should drop the talk of the beggarliness of Holy Scripture. Certainly, the Son of God is wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, yet they are so poor and insignificant only in comparison with the Infinite Majesty they present. The conjunction of the finite and the infinite does great honor to the finite. The basic and most elementary fact in dogmatics concerning the Scriptures must be that everywhere in the Bible no one but God speaks, even where the devil is cited.

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p 3, line 21, 28

But thereby the Word of God is never the word of man and I can therefore trust every word implicitly. Instead of saying: "God spake by the prophets" one can say "The Scriptures are God's Word." In fact, so the Bible speaks: I Thess. 2,13 the believers are praised because they received the word of the apostle not as man's word but as God's word. The emphasis is that God speaks, not that He speaks through man. The miracle of inspiration presented to us in Holy Scriptures say less of the origin but much more of what the result is.

Besides this Scripture everywhere demands divine honor and power. Scripture claims to have divine autopistia, divine efficacia, sufficiencia, perspicuitas. This is the character of the Scripture in which God has condescended to reveal Himself to man. Yet the human writers speak and write of God precisely as we do not expect God to speak. Scripture itself calls attention to the fact that what we are told gives us knowledge ek merous (I.Cor.13,12) Yet the clarity and glory of Scripture is extolled without bounds as in I.Cor.2 and II. Cor.3...The logos graptos is in this respect like the logos ensarkos in the state of humiliation. The voluntary and temporary renunciation of the use of the divine attributes is never the loss or the abandonment of the divine nature and essence. Essentially therefore also the Bible is now and ever the Word of God.

III. The divinum and the humanum of Scripture are never to be separated. Both are combined in an unio instrumentalis.

The Word of Scripture is a skandalon and moria not only because of the kerygma of the Crucified but because of the witness of Scripture concerning itself. Learned and unlearned, believers and unbelievers find offenses in it. The child of God bows to it and confesses it, even though the offense is not really removed. Be it that his own training and education, be it that the word of his teachers and elders raise the questions concerning the Word of God, or be it that Evil one himself raises the basic evil question: "Yea, hath God said", the justus and peccator has his reason and senses and lives in a world of empirical sciences and all of us are at times willing to compromise and say: perhaps it is both the Word of God and the Word of Man, or, as it was expressed in a paradox: The Word of God is both inerrant and fallible at the same time.

Thus we too may be tempted as theologians to divide Scripture according to its human and divine aspects; or according to the theological and empirical side; or even according to the soteriologically important and unimportant portions. Always the one is then considered inspired and infallible and the other just human and fallible. (Note, however, where Authority depends on recognition it resigns its authority to whatever gives recognition.)

We will always have to go back to the sedes. There are e.g. no passages in which the person of the human writer receives an independent emphasis. The human element is always dependent. I.Cor.2: Not with words etc. Romans 3,2: the oracles of God; I.Thess. 2: "as it is, the Word of God".. There is no competition between God's Word and the word of the holy men of God. They are mentioned but in such a humble, unobtrusive, and inglorious way that there is no room for a weighing of one against the other.

I shall read two quotes of official documents. One the Pope's and the other the Union document of Lutheran Free churches.

"Holy Scripture is of divine origin and of divine essence because God's Holy Spirit took the writers into His service and had inspired them with the Scriptures according to the matter and according to the form of words."

"For, by a supernatural power God so prompted and moved them (the holy writers), to write and so assisted them while they were writing, so that they have correctly grasped the ideas, have been enabled faithfully to write and have fittingly expressed with infallible truth all those things which he has bidden them to write, otherwise He Himself would not be the author of everything in Sacred Scripture."

(Einigungssaetze and Proventissimus Deus)

The "Einigungssaetze" state furthermore: Der Urtext ist von Menschen zu bestimmter Zeit, in bestimmter Lage, mit bestimmten Gaben und Kraefte und ihnen eigner Redeweise geschrieben worden und teils insofern das Geschick und die Geschichte menschlicher Buecher."

No Lutheran has ever denied the human form of Scripture. Nor did any one intend to violate the humanity of the Holy Men of God even where they were called calami or amanuenses. Where these expressions were used they were to serve as illustrations. Dogmatists after Quenstedt, even Flaccius, probably were on the right track even though at times they expressed their ideas in a manner that was subject to misunderstanding. In general they were willing to let the holy men write and speak as men.

Since any miracle is beyond so-called scientific investigation also the miracle of Inspiration cannot be analyzed, psychologized or explained in any manner satisfying the demands of reason. Yet the demand of modern theologians is that the holy men of God be permitted to write and speak as independent self-determining authors. The human side or aspect however cannot be God. One cannot say! The human word of the Scripture.. The union of the humanum and the divinum is an instrumental union, unio instrumentalis. The Holy Men of God were instruments of God in a way that they were not Robots, dictaphones, tape recorders, or typewriters, yet they were used by God with all their human attributes and peculiarities to write the divine word.

(The definition of instrument and the law of causality could be examined in this connection.) We must still hold to the definition that the holy writers are causa instrumentalis or minus principalis, or auctores secundarii. This is in accord with the Nicene Creed: "Who spake through the prophets", and with the Augsburg Confession: "Did the Holy Ghost in vain forewarn of these things?" (namely calling certain traditions "doctrines of devils"). AC XXVIII Par. 49. The Holy Ghost uses his power also over the whole man "ubi et quando he pleases. Since the fall of man, man's Word and God's Word have been in contradiction to each other. Here too the Holy Spirit creates Life out of death and breathes the living Word, the dust of human frailty. The Spirit breathes and the result is not a hermaphrodite or a hybrid but a unique eternal Book, a unit organically one, and the one blood of the Christ flowing through all its veins. There is no real authorship of man in cooperation with God; the doctrine too of Scripture teaches monergism. We are not called to speak a judgement of Solomon to decide whose child the Book is, nor are we to carry out the decision of the modern Bible critic and theologian to take the critical sword and cut the Book into the human and the divine..

IV. Following the third section we must say: Nor are the divine and human in Holy Scriptures evidenced by greater or lesser importance in soteriological statements.

We must maintain that the relative position of any statement of Scripture does not determine the grade of inspiration. Certainly, as all good Christian do know, the statements of Scripture become more important the closer they come to the central doctrines, but to think that the grade of inspiration or infallibility rises or falls in proportion to the proximity to the basic facts is nonsense. The peripheral matters, as claimed by some serious men, will lose their divine character almost to the point of zero. John 3, 16 practically all will consider divinely inspired, but that Rebecca "lighted from a camel" when she saw her espoused is none of the Holy Ghost's business. But nothing in Scripture is nonsensical, because there can as little be inspired nonsense as there can be inspired untruth.

For Luther inspiration includes the unity of Scripture. And the unity of Scripture based on the inspiration of the Holy Ghost makes for a unity in and with a central Theme, namely Christ. 1514 Luther said about I Cor.2: "Ego non intelligo usquam in Scripturam nisi Christum crucifixum", and again in his last years in the essay "Ueber die letzten Worte Davids" (WA 54,19,10.) "Denn da steckt's, da liegt's, da bleibt's: Wer diesen Mann, der da heisst Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn, den wir Christen predigen, nicht recht und rein hat noch haben will, der lasse die Bibel zufrieden, das rate ich: er stoest sich gewisslich und wird, je mehr er studiert, je blinder und toller, er sei Jude, Tatar, Tuercke, Christ oder wie er sich ruehmen will."

Nor does the difference between Law and Gospel in any way allow one to see a different type, grade, or potential of inspiration.

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